

Contract View-Master artists

By J. Clement

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In addition to the in-house View-Master artists a number of outside artists were hired to create reels. Many of them worked in the Hollywood film industry, but also had full careers outside of Hollywood. The six earliest diorama reels featured figurines created by unknown artists. Florence Thomas as a regular View-Master artist repaired the figures, worked on the dioramas, and wrote the stories. These were small cartoonish figures. Subsequent contract artists were hired because the in house artists could not fill the demand for new titles. Among the notable artists was Montyne who created various art works on commission and wrote books. Paul Sprunck was a film artist who had his own studio and created stop motion animation films, including some 3D films. He was one of the earliest known View-Master Hollywood artists and created the Sam Sawyer series of reels in 1951. These artists are covered in separate articles.

Wah Chang, who was born in Honolulu in 1917 and died in 2003, worked on Tom & Jerry, Woody Woodpecker, and Bugs Bunny reels in 1951. Wah was an artist who worked on films including Land of the Lost, The Time Machine, and Planet of the Apes. Warren Chaney was a producer, artist, and writer born in 1942 in Louisville, Ky. He created the Robin Hood reels and asked sculptor Martha Armstrong (1920-2004) to help by creating costumes. They also collaborated on 20,000 Leagues under the sea. Martha was teaching at Encino elementary school. She was a puppet maker and then went on collaborating with Blanding Sloan to create many reels. Blanding (1886-1975) was a stage set designer, engraver, and painter. He is credited with working on one film. Martha did the puppets and Blanding worked on the sets. Martha, who had also worked for various film makers such as Hannah and Barbera, was hired by Mattel to design dolls. She is considered to be a legendary doll maker who designed anatomically realistic articulated figures.



1946 FT03 Jack & Beanstalk 1 Jack takes cow to market
Scene by unknown Hollywood artists



1951 800 3 Bugs Bunny and Elmer Fudd, The Hunter –
"Cwazy wabbit! It's hunting season!"
Scene by Wah Chang



1951 810 4 Tom & Jerry in The Cat Trapper - "Cheese schmeeze I won't bite on that!"
Scene by Wah Chang



1951 820 1 Woody Woodpecker in The Pony Express Ride –
"Ha! My next victim will be Woody Woodpecker"
Scene by Wah Chang



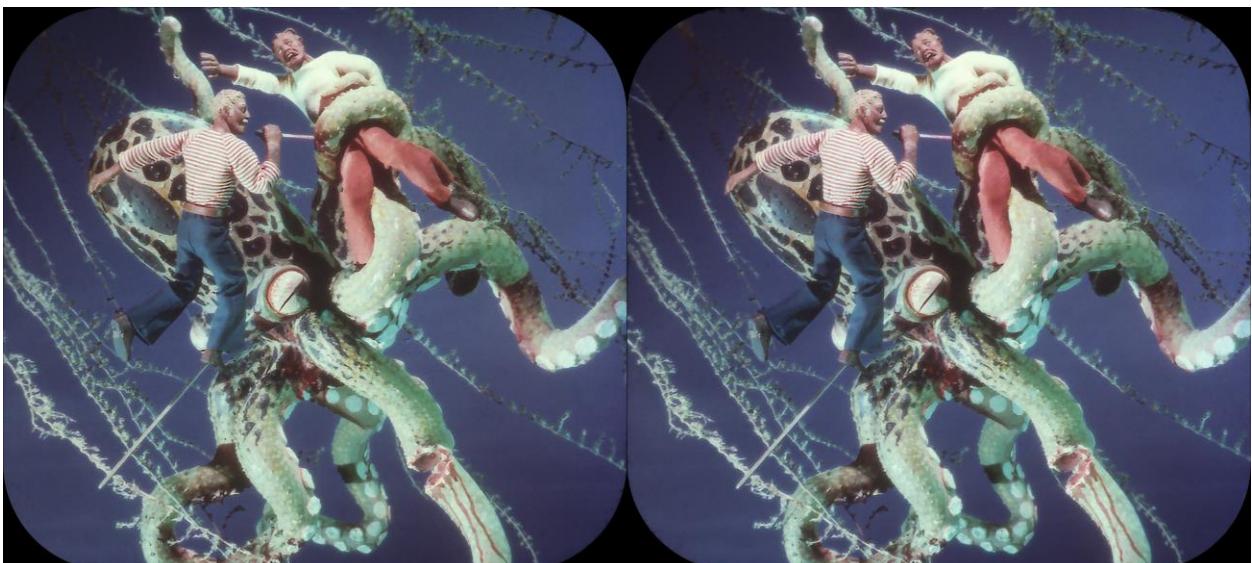
1954 972A Robin Hood meets Friar Tuck 7
"Good Friar join my band," said Robin merrily
Scene by Warren Chaney, Martha Armstrong

This packet has first class dioramas. Unfortunately, the faces have the same smile in all scenes, which diminishes the story. It covers only 3 episodes without the ending, unlike the Disney Robin Hood reels.

This packet follows the original book more closely than the Disney movie in that the Nautilus resembles the illustrations in the book. The ending apes the movie by tacking on the explosive ending of the second book, The Mysterious Island. The dioramas are beautiful, but this packet also suffers from obviously having characters' expressions the same from one scene to another.

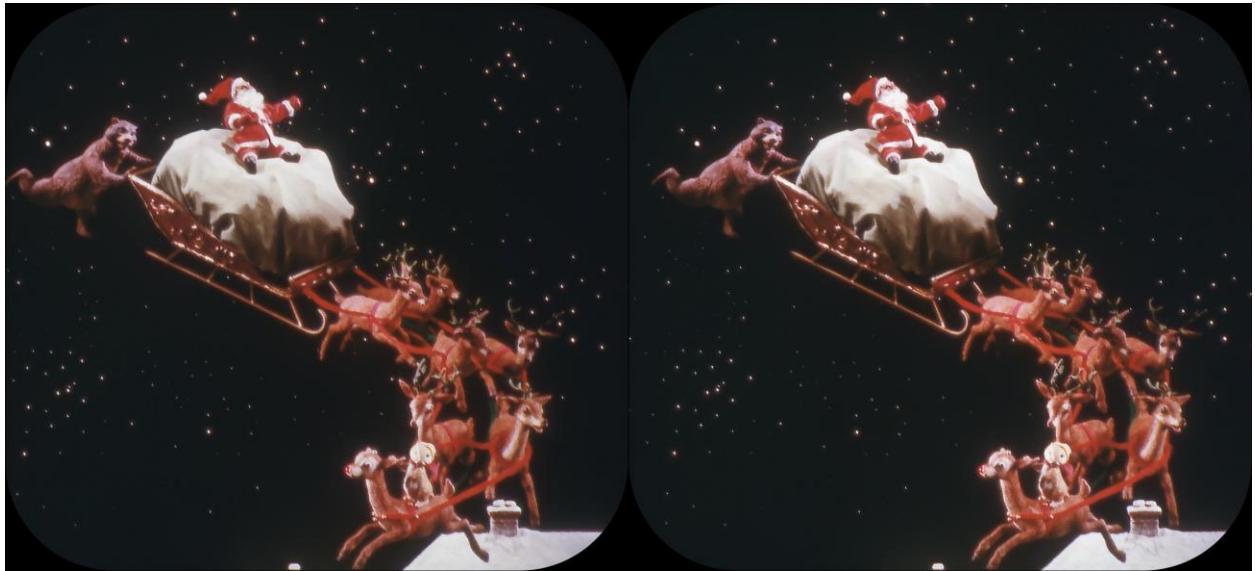


1954 974A 20,000 Leagues under the Sea 3
“You are my prisoners” proclaims Captain Nemo
Scene by Warren Chaney, Martha Armstrong

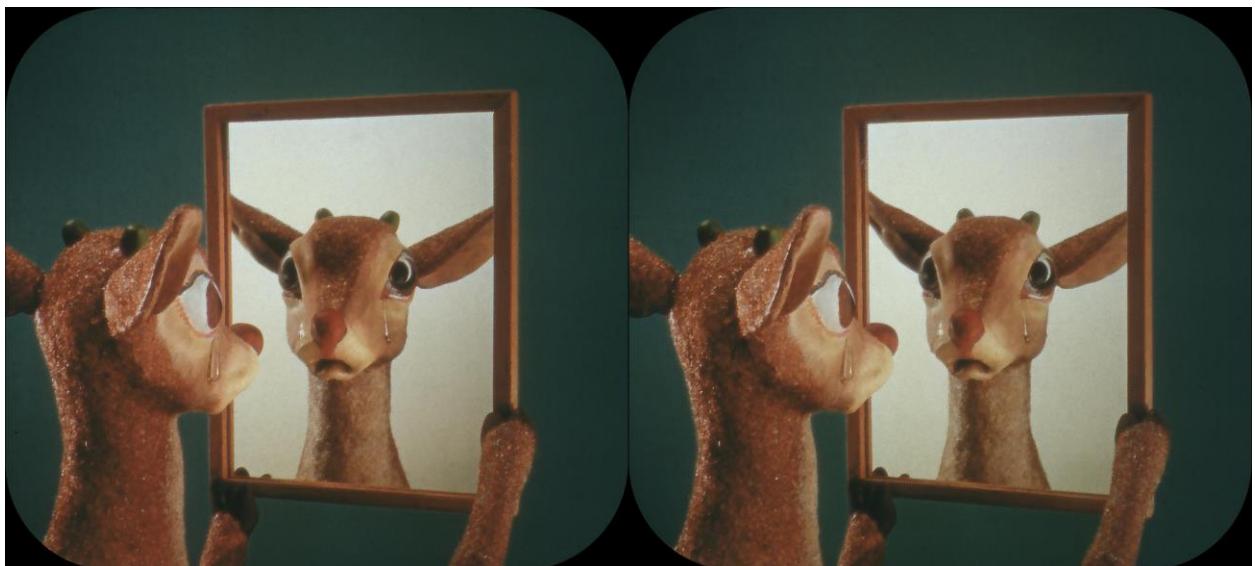


1954 974B 20,000 Leagues under the Sea 6 Ned dives underwater to save the crewman
Scene by Warren Chaney, Martha Armstrong

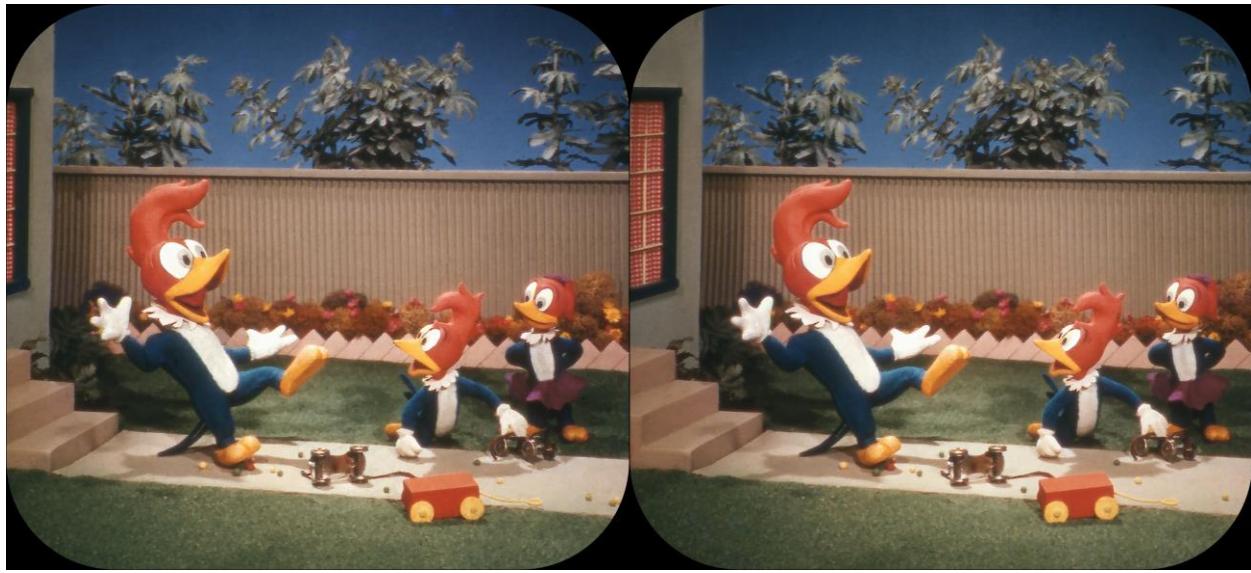
This was one of the most difficult sets of figures to be created by Martha. The three reels seamlessly continued the original reel by Florence Thomas. The scenes are very nice.



1955 FT26 J BADDY, the Brilliant Bear 7
Another merry Christmas thanks to Rudolph and J Baddy Bear
Scene by Martha Armstrong, Blanding Sloan



1955 FT28 RUDOLPH shines again 2
Rudolph full of self-pity loses his magic shining nose
Scene by Martha Armstrong, Blanding Sloan



1955 821 1 Woody Woodpecker in The Bill Collector –
Hurrying off to work Woody has toy trouble!
Scene by Martha Armstrong, Blanding Sloan

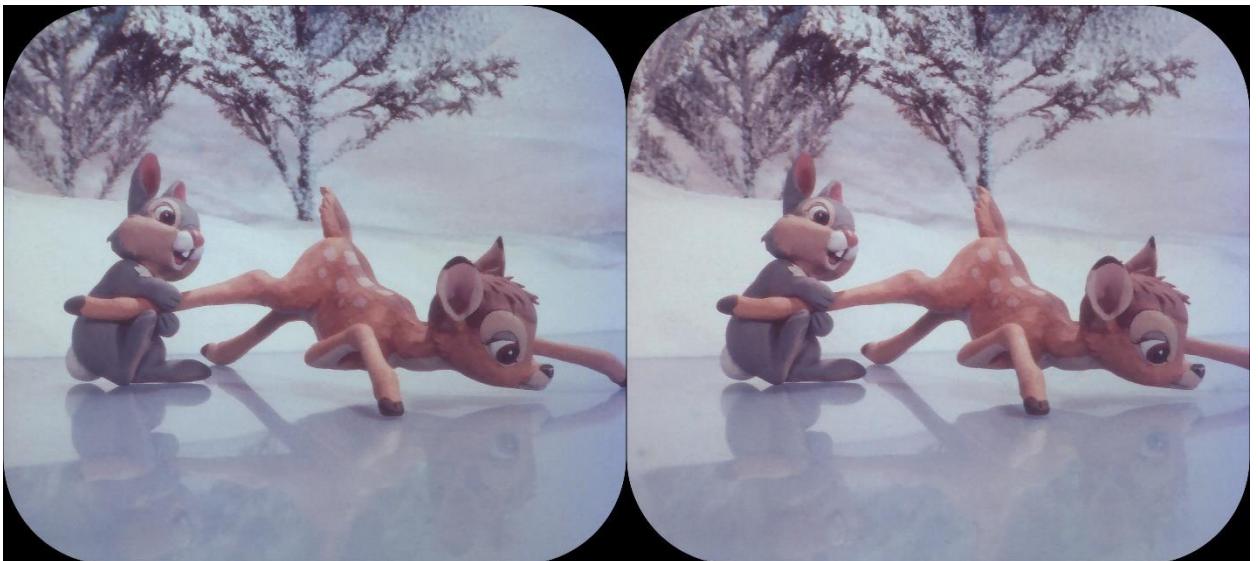


1955 822 7 Andy Panda in Mystery Tracks –
"Come on, Andy, We'd better make tracks ourselves, and fast!"
Scene by Martha Armstrong, Blanding Sloan

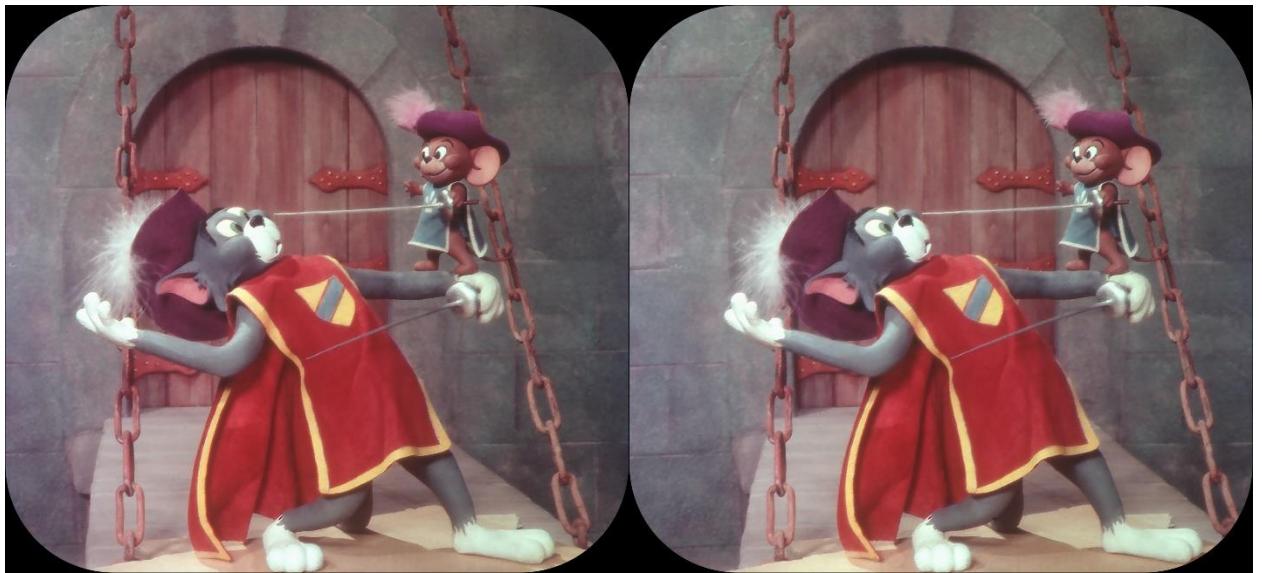
This is the second version of Bambi. The first one was a single Tru-Vue card created by Joe Liptak. Later A third packet was created by 3D cartoon artists. To my knowledge Joe's beautiful lush version, with different scenes, was never crossed over to View-Master reels. This set has beautiful scenes from the Disney movie. None of the darker memorable scenes are covered, such as the fire.



1956 FT42A Bambi 5 A butterfly lit on his tale, "Bird!" cried Bambi
Scene by Martha Armstrong, Blanding Sloan



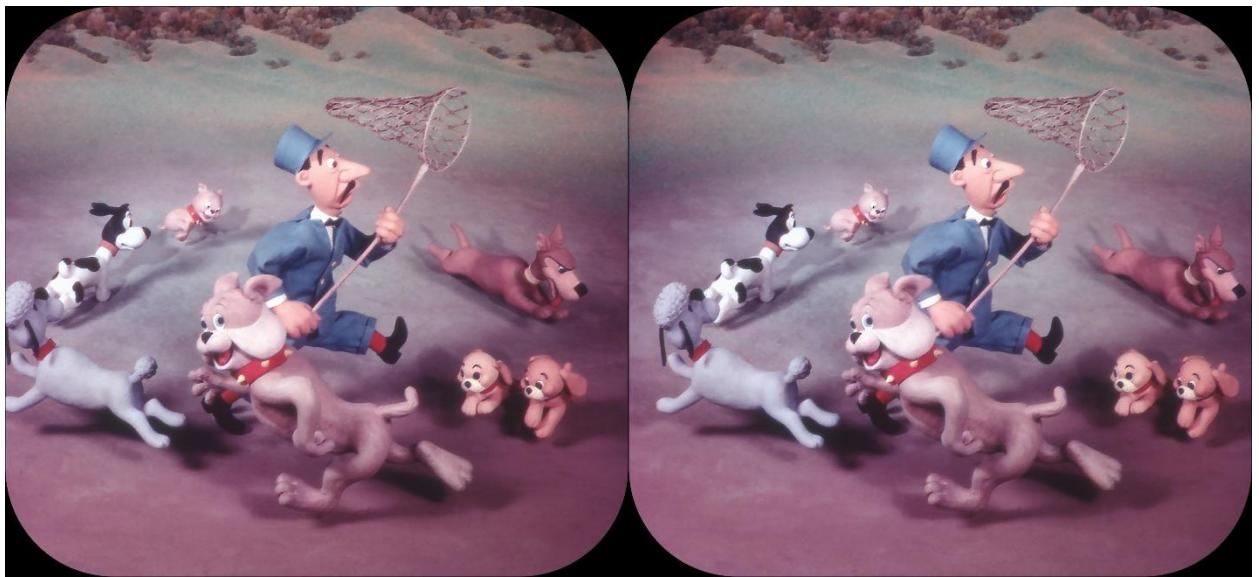
1956 FT42B Bambi 3 Crash! Bambi's legs went every which way!
Scene by Martha Armstrong, Blanding Sloan



1956 B5111 4 Tom and Jerry in *Touché Pussycat* –
"Now, Monsieur Pussycat, we are on even terms, no"
Scene by Martha Armstrong, Blanding Sloan



1956 B5112 7 Droopy in *Funny Bullets* –
"We need dogs like you, Deputy Droopy," the sheriff said.
Scene by Martha Armstrong, Blanding Sloan



1956 B5113 4 Spike and Tyke in Mancatchers –
The freed dogs ran yipping, "Yipe! Yipe! Arf! Arf!"
Scene by Martha Armstrong, Blanding Sloan

This is one of the most beautiful packets created by this collaboration. The expressive faces and the impulsive Littlest Angel raise it above being too sweet. The Littlest Angel is very realistically modeled. One close-up scene makes one wonder whether thy might have used a live boy.



1957 FT32A Littlest Angel 01 Awaiting admittance to heaven
Scene by Martha Armstrong, Blanding Sloan



1957 FT32B Littlest Angel 14 It came to pass that Jesus was to be born
Scene by Martha Armstrong, Blanding Sloan

This is the second version of Peter Pan after the earlier Tru-Vue card created by Joe Liptak. His version was eventually crossed over to a single View-Master reel with unfaded Kodachrome film. His scenes are very similar to corresponding ones in this packet.



1957 FT40 Peter Pan 06 "Come," cried Peter, and out the window they soared
Scene by Martha Armstrong, Blanding Sloan



1957 FT40 Peter Pan 19 With a cry of terror Hook fell to the crocodile
Scene by Martha Armstrong, Blanding Sloan



1957 842-A 6 Donald Duck- Sharpshooting nephews save an air-sick uncle
Scene by Martha Armstrong, Blanding Sloan



1957 842-B 1 Donald Duck - "Out! You pesty chipmunks" cried Donald Duck
Scene by Martha Armstrong, Blanding Sloan

This versions of The Night Before Christmas has the dog and the little boy to enliven it. It is very cute with beautiful backgrounds and lots of humor.



1958 B3821 Visit from St Nicholas 7 A miniature sleigh and eight tiny reindeer
Scene by Martha Armstrong, Blanding Sloan



1958 B3823 Vist from St Nicholas 16 And I laughed when I saw him
Scene by Martha Armstrong, Blanding Sloan



1985 D236-1 02 The Tale of Peter Rabbit - "Now don't get into mischief"
Scenes by David Burder



1985 D236-2 08 The Tale of Peter Rabbit - Suddenly Peter saw Mr McGregor who chased him

David Burder created a variety of packets for View-Master in the mid-1980s. Subjects included Scenes around Great Britain, Steam Trains, Aircraft, Thomas the Tank Engine, Muppets, and Roland Rat. He also published several 3D books and books about 3D photography. Peter Rabbit and Thomas the Tank Engine are his only dioramas. Both the Muppets and Roland Rat are puppet TV show reels. The still available reels were all created in a time frame where the images have not yet faded to magenta in 2021. His work was released by the Belgium plant.

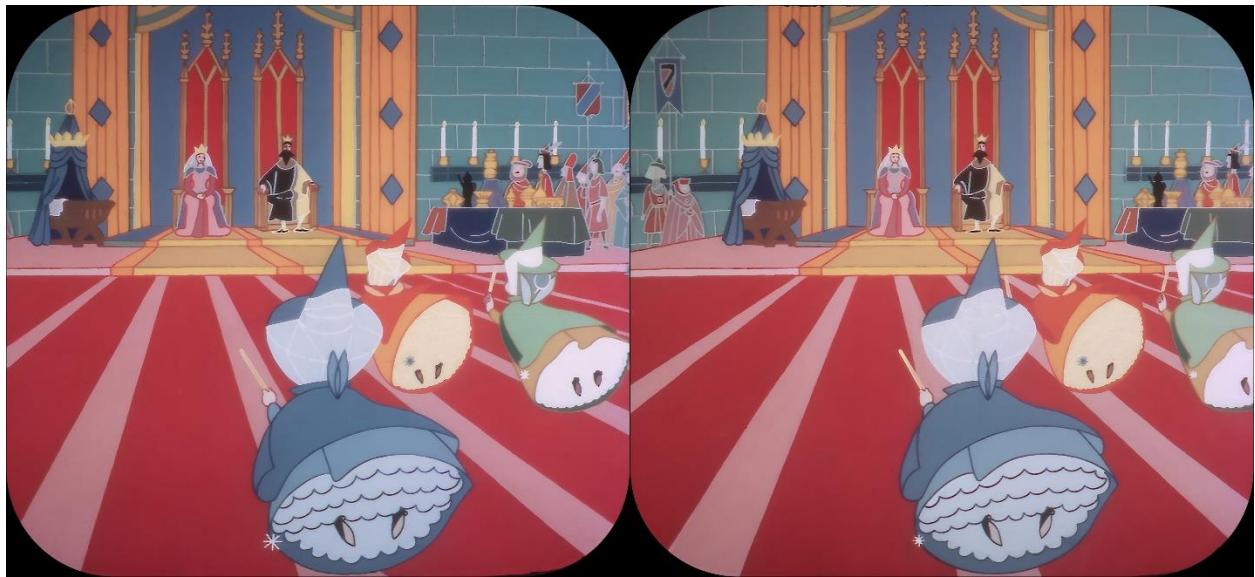
An Unknown German contract cartoon artist created several packets that had beautiful perspective 3D depth. He died before he could pass on his technique. Later Lew Turner made a 3D drawing machine that could do the same thing. Pete Dorsett even later did very good 3D drawings without a machine, and cranked out a huge number of packets.



1958 B5281 6 Mickey Mouse in The Brave little Tailor - He used his strongest thread for flying loops
Packet: Mickey Mouse



1958 B5293 7 Pluto and the Bees - Now Pluto was in the doghouse, with the bees for company!
Packet: Pluto



1959 B3081 Sleeping Beauty 01 Three good fairies came to Princess Aura's christening



1959 B3083 Sleeping Beauty 15 The prince escaped from the evil fairie's dungeon

The rounding and 3D perspective in these drawings is excellent!

Bibliography: *View-Master Memories* by Mary Ann & Wolfgang Sell

Listing of Contract artist reels:

Montyne and Paul Sprunk listed in separate articles.

1. 1951 800 Wah Chang - Bugs Bunny & Elmer Fudd The Hunter
2. 1951 810 Wah Chang - Tom & Jerry in Catnappers
3. 1951 820 Wah Chang – Woody Woodpecker in Pony Express
4. 1954 972a,b,c Warren Chaney & Martha Armstrong – Robin Hood
5. 1954 974a,b,c Warren Chaney & Martha Armstrong – 20,000 Leagues under the sea
6. 1955 821, B510 Martha Armstrong & Blanding Sloan – Woody Woodpecker, Bill Collector
7. 1955 822, B510 Martha Armstrong & Blanding Sloan – Andy Panda, Mystery Tracks
8. 1955 823, B510 Martha Armstrong & Blanding Sloan – Chilly Willy, No fishing
9. 1956 812 a,b,c Martha Armstrong & Blanding Sloan – Tom & Jerry, Droopy, Spike & Tyke
10. 1956 FT-26 Martha Armstrong & Blanding Sloan – J. Baddy the Brilliant Bear
11. 1956 FT-27 Martha Armstrong & Blanding Sloan – Uncle Bigby the Blue Nosed Reindeer
12. 1956 FT-28 Martha Armstrong & Blanding Sloan – Rudolph Shines again
13. 1956 FT-42a.b.c Martha Armstrong & Blanding Sloan – Bambi
14. 1957 FT-32a,b,c Martha Armstrong & Blanding Sloan – The Littlest Angel
15. 1957 FT-40a,b,c Martha Armstrong & Blanding Sloan – Peter Pan
16. 1957 842a,b,c Martha Armstrong & Blanding Sloan – Donald Duck
17. 1958 B382 Martha Armstrong & Blanding Sloan – The Visit from St. Nicholas
18. 1958 B528 Unknown German cartoon artist – Mickey Mouse
19. 1958 B529 Unknown German cartoon artist - Pluto
20. 1959 B308 Unknown German cartoon artist – Sleeping Beauty
21. 1984 D263 David Burder – Thomas the Tank Engine & Friends
22. 1985 D236 David Burder - The Tale of Peter Rabbit